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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of noon EST, 14 December 1967)

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The Communist "winter-spring" offensive has encountered a series of costly reverses and there is evidence that enemy main force units hope to evade major contact with allied forces on sweep operations. On the political scene, the new Thieu government has shown few signs so far of developing promising new programs for the country.	

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FAR EAST

Hanoi has again rejected United Nations competence to deal with the Vietnam question. In its first comment on US soundings concerning renewed debate in the Security Council, Hanoi denounced this step as an attempt to make the UN serve US policy and to "scrap the 1954 Geneva agreements." The National Liberation Front also denied that it had tried to send representatives to the UN despite U Thant's statement that such an approach had been made.

In a move to emphasize its ability and determination to continue the war without concessions, Hanoi publicized a renewed pledge by Foreign Minister Chen I of Chinese support "until complete victory" has been won.

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VIETNAM

The Communist country-wide "winter-spring" offensive has recently encountered a series of costly reverses.

The largest action occurred last weekend when a three battalion enemy force engaged two battalions of the South Vietnamese 21st Division in the Mekong Delta province of Chuong Thien. Such a concentration of enemy troops is unusual in the delta where the enemy for more than a year has operated primarily in company-size formations, and has launched only occasional battalion-size attacks. The encounter reportedly cost the Viet Cong some 450 killed. Sixty South Vietnamese were killed and 102 wounded.

Large-scale fighting continued in the rice-rich coastal flatlands of northeastern Binh Dinh Province near Bong Son where elements of the 22nd Regiment, a subordinate of the North Vietnamese 3rd Division, have been attempting to fight their way out of an Allied encirclement. This engagement--known as the "Battle of Tam Quang"--has thus far resulted in more than 500 enemy soldiers killed since it began on 6 December. The fighting suggests that the North Vietnamese 3rd Division forces, which have suffered serious losses since early 1966, have been reinforced and resupplied.

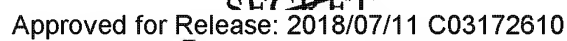
There continues to be evidence that some Communist main force units hope to evade major contact with allied forces on sweep operations.

Elements of the North Vietnamese 2nd Division also continue to avoid major confrontation with US sweeps in central I Corps. This division, which reportedly is beset with morale and leadership problems, has suffered heavy losses in the Quang Tin - Quang Nam province area in recent months.

South Vietnamese Political Situation

The new government of President Thieu after a month and a half in office has shown few signs of developing promising new programs for the country. Thus far, the government seems to be mainly concerned with its own internal organization and relationships. There are indications that the unsettled feud between Thieu and Vice President Ky may be complicating the whole process of working out future programs. Although not deliberately sabotaging Thieu's efforts, Ky appears content to adopt a wait-and-see attitude in the apparent expectation that the President will commit serious political errors which will enhance Ky's own future political prospects.

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Complaints have been voiced by persons close to the government about what they call Thieu's dilettante approach to the day-to-day problems of governing. Moreover, Thieu is evidently not providing adequate guidance to Prime Minister Loc who appears to be waiting for cues from the President before moving ahead. Loc's cabinet, composed largely of technicians, has yet to come up with any significant new programs. It appears particularly reluctant to take any bold steps in the economic sphere which might draw criticism from influential circles.

In addition to the internal pressures which are contributing to the government's lack of decisiveness, Thieu is reportedly faced with a rising tide of resentment from certain military officers who fear they may lose their prerogatives under the civilian government. Such attitudes among the military, which must still be taken into consideration by the new administration, seem to be delaying the government's anticipated reorganization of the military establishment, and may further hinder its promised reforms of the civil administration, including the anticorruption drive.

Neither house of the National Assembly is yet in a position to enact legislation, and no legislative proposals have yet been placed before it. Both the Upper and Lower houses are still preoccupied with their own internal or-

ganizations--a process which may continue into early 1968. So far, members of both houses have been content only to present resolutions calling the government to task for its manpower mobilization decree and its handling of political prisoners.

Certain antigovernment elements, particularly in the Lower House, may be expected to continue such efforts which are mainly designed to embarrass the government. Although a majority in each house appears basically inclined toward cooperation with the government, National Assembly members generally seem eager to demonstrate their independence of the executive branch and to ingratiate themselves with their constituents.

Hanoi Again Rejects UN Jurisdiction

In its first comment on the possibility of renewed UN consideration of the Vietnam question, the party daily, Nhan Dan, on 12 December charged that the US was up to its "old tricks" of making the UN serve its "aggressive plan against Vietnam" and of "scrapping the Geneva agreements." It reiterated Hanoi's contention that the UN has "no jurisdiction whatsoever" in the Vietnam problem. The article insisted once again that the Geneva Conference is the only international body with any responsibility for the Vietnam problem and that the UN has the duty to respect it.

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